



House of Representatives

File No. 724

General Assembly

January Session, 2017

(Reprint of File No. 382)

Substitute House Bill No. 5584
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 5, 2017

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A SMALL BUSINESS
HOTLINE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2017*) Not later than October 1,
2 2017, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
3 shall establish and operate a state-wide small business hotline to
4 provide prospective and existing small business owners with
5 individualized information and guidance regarding business
6 formation and development, networking resources and technical and
7 financial assistance from the state and quasi-public agencies. The
8 commissioner shall, within available appropriations, operate and staff
9 such hotline during normal business hours. The commissioner may
10 partner with a nonprofit organization to carry out the provisions of
11 this section.

12 Sec. 2. (*Effective October 1, 2017*) Not later than January 1, 2019, the
13 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall
14 submit a report on the small business hotline established pursuant to

15 section 1 of this act, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
16 of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
17 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce. Such
18 report shall include a description of the services offered through the
19 hotline, how the hotline is advertised to businesses, a summary of the
20 most common types of assistance requested through the hotline and
21 statistics concerning hotline call volume.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	New section

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to establish and operate a state-wide small business hotline to provide information and guidance to business owners. The bill allows DECD to create this hotline in collaboration with a nonprofit organization.

There is no fiscal impact as the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), a nonprofit organization, currently runs a hotline with a dedicated staff person to provide information and guidance to small businesses.

House "A" has no fiscal impact by modifying the requirements in the underlying bill regarding the small business hotline that is to be administered by DECD in collaboration with a nonprofit organization. The original bill cites CERC as that nonprofit; however, the amendment allows DECD to collaborate with any nonprofit organization.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5584 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A SMALL BUSINESS HOTLINE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner to establish and operate a hotline that provides individualized information and guidance to entrepreneurs and small business owners across the state on how to start and develop a business, identify networking resources, and access technical and financial assistance from state and quasi-public agencies. The commissioner must do this by October 1, 2017 (the bill's effective date). She must also operate and staff the hotline within available appropriations. Lastly, the commissioner may establish, operate, and staff the hotline in collaboration with a nonprofit organization.

The commissioner must submit a report on the hotline's operation to the Commerce Committee by January 1, 2019. The report must describe the hotline's services and how it is advertised, summarize the most common types of assistance entrepreneurs and small businesses request, and provide statistics on the hotline's call volume.

*House Amendment "A" (1) requires the commissioner to establish and operate the hotline by October 1, 2017; (2) specifies that she must operate and staff it within available appropriations; (3) allows her to establish, operate, and staff the hotline with any nonprofit organization, not just with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center; and (4) drops the requirement that the hotline must be operated by a natural person during normal business hours.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2017

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 1 (03/21/2017)